

Appl. No.: 10/757,287
Amdt. dated October 19, 2006
Reply to Office action of July 19, 2006

Amendment to the Drawings

Please substitute the attached drawing sheet that contains Fig. 1 for the original drawing sheet that contains Fig. 1.

REMARKS

The Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given to the present application.

Reconsideration of the subject patent application in view of the present Remarks is respectfully requested. The present amendment amends claims 1 and 7, cancels 6 and adds new claims 12-14.

Independent claim 1 was rejected in view of Darby et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,720,411). It is believed that further rejection is not needed. Claim 1, as amended, distinguishes the present invention from Darby et al. because Darby et al. discloses a spring-like, helical locking ring 79 instead of a retainer ring made of arced elements that are movable relative to each other. Although Darby et al. discloses "a segmented ring as presently used in pressure filtration vessels" (col. 8, lines 64-66) and the present invention discloses a ring that is segmented, a ring with arced elements that can move relative to each other is not disclosed by Darby et al. Therefore, claim 1 is allowable.

Also, the claims which depend from claim 1 are now allowable. In particular, claims 1, 4, 5 and 9-11, which were previously rejected in view of Darby et al. are allowable. Thus further discussion is not needed. However, for the sake of completeness, the following remarks are provided.

Claims 2 and 3 were rejected in view of Darby et al. and Galasso et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,447,712). In addition to the differences created by the amendment to claim 1, for at least the following reason, the Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed. The washer 160 of Galasso is not an elliptical head member because the term 'elliptical' refers to the dome shape of the elliptical head member and such a shape derives from its role as a part supplementing the universal head member. In contrast, the washer 160 has a lower surface that simply slopes outwardly. Thus, the claims are allowable.

The amended Fig. 1 is now consistent with Figs. 5A and 5B in that the radial outer portion 115 of the retainer ring 100 which has a greater outer diameter than the outer diameter of the inner portion 110 is correctly shown.

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In consideration of the foregoing analysis, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any fees required by this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, Order No. 35015US1.

Respectfully submitted,
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